

# Brain Injury Association of Virginia

## Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Service Providers

### 2022 Legislative Needs Statement

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#### **WHAT:**

*\$1,125,000 to create a "Housing Specialist" position at each state funded community based BI program*

#### **PATRONS AND ITEM NUMBERS:**

- Del Matt Fariss
- Sen Frank Ruff

#### **WHY:**

- Despite facing the same needs as those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with brain injury have little to no residential service options available to them within the Commonwealth due to a lack of waiver supports
- The shortage in housing and support options for individuals with disabilities has reached crisis proportions; 41% of the people who called the Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV) last year told us housing was one of their top 3 needs.
- The BIAV has seen a 60% increase in the number of calls we receive for housing related assistance; 66% of state funded brain injury programs report an increase in the calls they receive; 25% said it is a significant increase, 41% report a small increase, 33% report about the same
- Housing is known to be one of the primary social determinants of health, and affordable, accessible, and appropriate housing can be life-saving.
- Staff are needed at community based-brain injury programs to liaise with local housing entities, represent the needs of the brain injury community in housing related conversations, and work with their clients to obtain the necessary housing supports and/or develop independent living skills to maintain clients safely and stably in the community.
- As the brain injury community is just beginning to develop housing capacity in the area of housing, and as we will be starting behind several other advocacy organizations in terms of our tenure and experience in this service area, we feel these positions will be critical to our ability to make effective and efficient use of the High Needs Support Waiver many of those we serve may require.

#### **HOW:**

Through a DARS Appropriation and existing contract processes, 9 existing community based brain injury programs would receive funding for and be directed to establish a staff position to facilitate housing placement and/or the development of independent living skills for their clients.